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ABSTRACT

Outcomes and applications of Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) study groups composed of teachers and administrators to investigate a single educational issue and develop a product of use to practitioners are described in this report. Contents include an introduction of the study group as a professional development tool, a discussion of the variety of applied research and research synthesis strategies, a review of educational topics explored by the study groups, a report of effective means of disseminating educator-produced publications, a description of AEL's quality control and evaluation measures, and an outline of future applications. The appendix (the bulk of the document) contains study group materials and worksheets. (4 references) (LMI)

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Educator Study Groups: Professional Development for Members and Product Users

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Educator Study Groups:
Professional Development for Members and Product Users

Introduction and Objectives

Since 1986, two programs of the Appalachia Educational Laboratory have sponsored, in collaboration with professional educator associations, study groups of teachers and school administrators. The purpose of each group is to investigate a single educational issue and to develop a product of use to practitioners. Thirty-three publications and other products have been developed by small groups of teachers and/or administrators who have used applied research and research synthesis methodologies.

In each study group, the teacher or administrator members are actively involved in investigating the issue, developing the research design, outlining the study, developing instruments, analyzing data, reporting findings, peer editing, and disseminating results. Study group members use AEL's information resources and are reimbursed for meeting attendance expenses but are not compensated.

Educator associations with which AEL's Classroom Instruction (CI) and School Governance and Administration (SGA) programs work include the National Education Association state affiliates; affiliates of the American Association of School Administrators; and the state school boards associations in the states of AEL's Region--Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. These associations, whose members comprise the majority of teachers and local administrators in the Region, work with AEL staff to select topics of study; contact and nominate members;

provide meeting facilities and some participant support; and to announce, print, and disseminate the products at no cost to educators in their states. AEL makes each final product available at cost to educators in its four-state Region.

This Roundtable session paper on AEL's educator study groups addresses the following objectives:

1. Introduce the study group as a professional development experience for both members and product users.

2. Discuss the variety of applied research and research synthesis strategies used.

3. Review current educational topics explored by study groups in the more than 30 study group publications now disseminated.

4. Report effective means of disseminating educator-produced publications including Regional Laboratory and association printing; reprinting by local educators, schools, and districts; and conference and meeting presentations by study group members.

5. Describe AEL's quality control and evaluation measures including member, association, and product user feedback.

6. Outline the future of the study group as a practitioner professional development strategy and discuss variations AEL plans or is currently implementing.

Perspectives or Theoretical Framework

Study groups represent an assisted form of educator action research. Each includes intensive study group member involvement from the conception of the group's product through reviewing related literature; developing survey, telephone interview, or other data-gathering instruments; analyzing and reporting data; peer editing; and, in many cases, presenting the final product at association, AEL, district, school, or other meetings or conferences. The benefits of action research are described by Loucks-Horsley, Harding, Arbuckle,

Murray, Dubea, and Williams in Continuing to Learn: A Guidebook for Teacher Development (1987) where they state: "The action research strategy for staff development assumes that a more intense teacher involvement with research will increase the likelihood that they will use research results, thus contributing to their growth as teachers. Helping teachers answer their own questions is far superior to giving them answers to someone else's questions" (p. 48). All study group members are nominated to participate based upon their interest in the topic and their related experience.

While action research often has been conducted by highly motivated educators working without support and by educators acting in collaboration with universities, the study group assisted by a Regional Educational Laboratory and one or more educator associations is a recent and mutually beneficial innovation. In addition to the value of product dissemination to association and members, the study group affords educators a professional development experience they may be unwilling to undertake within their schools. This experience can empower them to organize similar projects within their schools, districts, or local associations. The Academy for Educational Development noted the importance of such activities to career professional development in Teacher Development in Schools: A Report to the Ford Foundation (1985), stating "Therefore, all teachers must have opportunities to assume new roles over the course of their teaching careers--particularly in helping one another to examine what they are doing and to explore alternatives for improving pedagogy within a particular school" (p. 50).

An added benefit of the study group structure used by AEL and collaborating educator associations is the opportunity for educators to have their work published. Study group products are widely announced in association journals, AEL's newsletter and product catalog, product flyers distributed at association and AEL events; and printed and disseminated by AEL and the professional associations. Seeing one's name in print and sharing one's publication with colleagues reinforces educator writing and research habits. AEL also shares announcements of new study group publications with the network of Regional Educational Laboratories and Centers and submits all for accessioning to the ERIC Clearinghouses.

AEL's Approach to Structuring Study Groups

General Guidelines. Study groups were initiated by the two AEL programs, the Classroom Instruction program working with state teacher associations and the School Governance and Administration program working with state administrator organizations in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. AEL's Professional Preparation and Research (PP & R) program also employed the study group structure as a collaborative working relationship of higher educators in Tennessee during 1988.

The following guidelines for study groups evolved early in 1986 following approval for the strategy first outlined in AEL's proposal to operate a Regional Educational Laboratory which was funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (United States Department of Education) in 1985.

- The group should be small, most consist of 10 or fewer educators. AEL staff found it easier to maintain communications and divide tasks among a small group.

- An issue or problem should be selected that is important to local school educators and feasible to address within the limits of the study group. Issues are most often identified by the professional association collaborating on the study. This method works to ensure association dissemination of the product, also.

- Group members, with help from AEL staff and association suggestions, should determine their own processes and products in order to develop commitment to and ownership of the groups' goals.

- Study group costs should be small and shared by the cosponsoring association, AEL, individual participants, and (in some cases) by their employers.

- AEL and association staffs should help facilitate the organization and functioning of the groups, and should assist the production and dissemination of study group products.

Laying the Groundwork for Study Groups. AEL staff were charged in their 1986-90 funding cycle with working with and through associations of educators in accomplishing the goal of linking practitioners with educational research and development. The study group was conceived as a viable structure to go beyond informing educators to involving them in the development of educational research and development products. Three reasons in particular pointed the Classroom Instruction and School Governance and Administration programs toward collaboration with the professional teacher and administrator associations in AEL's Region: (1) professional association involvement would help ensure that the issue or problem studied was important to a large group of educators; (2) the association was in the best position to identify potential group members; and (3) the association would have certain resources and mechanisms in place to help with group organization and logistics.

The major teacher and administrator associations in AEL's Region (the National Education Association for teachers and the American Association of School Administrators) are represented by state affiliate

nominees to AEL's Board of Directors. During early 1986, these representatives helped set up meetings with association leaders and, in some cases, helped to organize and meet with the first study groups. At these meetings the advantages of participating were outlined as follows:

- **For individuals**—The benefits include involvement in a meaningful professional activity and in the recognition that can come through subsequent reports and publications.
- **For those providing technical assistance**—Higher education faculty (involved in selected SGA and PP&R study groups) may realize benefits in authoring reports and products, and in contributing to their institutions' service mission.
- **For professional associations**--Study groups provide a vehicle for association members to become involved in meaningful professional activity directed at practitioner and school improvement. The associations receive recognition for their involvement in reports. Most importantly, the associations receive masters of a member-produced publication of interest to their members without investing association staff time in development, editing, or typesetting yet reviewing all copy at each phase of development. Association-specific announcement fliers are also prepared by AEL and associations are encouraged to print and disseminate both in quantity.
- **For AEL**—Benefits include identifying and organizing a cadre of individuals who have specialized expertise in the Region; the development of knowledge and products that relate to accomplishing AEL's goals of improving education and educational opportunity; improving AEL's visibility in its Region; and receiving help with dissemination of research and development-based information.

Study Group Research Methodologies

Study groups were conceived as temporary organizational units, created to perform a specific and limited task. Study group members contribute their expertise and effort as volunteers in service to the profession. The following three basic types of projects are most often selected by study groups or requested by their organizing associations:

1. Conduct applied research. A group may create new knowledge about a specific topic leading to the production of a research and practice report (design, methodology, findings, and utilization of findings). Seventeen of the total of 32 study group products released to date have employed survey methodology. With association cooperation in printing, disseminating, and collecting responses, the survey can provide opinion and practice summaries and can identify model programs. Surveys are most often study group-developed following review of related literature. While both quantitative and qualitative analysis have been used, study group members most often have identified emergent categories and summarized major findings for sections which they have taken on to report.

Telephone interviewing is the second most frequently used applied research methodology. Often, after reviewing the results of survey research to identify case studies or exemplary practice models, study group members find it necessary to conduct more extensive data gathering by designing and implementing a telephone interview protocol. In all forms of research and R & D synthesis conducted by study groups, members have been actively involved in choosing the research design, becoming trained to conduct the research strategy, analyzing the research data, and independently summarizing and reporting one or more sections of the publication(s). Since study group members usually have no training in quantitative research nor access to computer analysis of data, descriptive qualitative studies reporting emergent categories have most often been utilized. AEL staff provide training in the research methodology selected for data collection, analysis, and reporting.

2. Conduct R & D-based product development. A group could design, develop, and field-test a new product intended to meet a particular need in educational practice. The group then writes (1) a technical report of the R & D processes used and the field-test results; and (2) a practice report describing the product, its intended use(s), and the appropriate conditions for its use. The group then finalizes its product for publication. This methodology has led to the development of computer awareness sessions for Tennessee teachers and administrators including software; organization of an instructional conference (in which several study group members served as presenters; production of two guides to conduct Parent Involvement Seminars; and a series of videotaped teleconferences of conversations with authors of recent educational reform books in which participants are provided with print materials necessary to conduct workshops.

3. Conduct knowledge synthesis. A group may translate existing knowledge into a form that makes it useful for responding in a practical manner to concerns confronting educators. Thirteen study group products have contributed to their own professional growth and that of their readers by thoroughly reviewing the literature on an educational issue and producing a user-friendly summary of research and practice techniques.

Many study groups have used combinations of the above discussed research methodologies in order to provide the reader with a brief and current review of the literature, findings from a survey or telephone interview, and case studies of model programs all related to the issue under study. Each study group product provides an extensive bibliography on the topic of study and many have included annotated resource

sections. The complete list of AEL study group publications currently disseminated is provided as Appendix A.

Topics Addressed by Study Groups of Educators

Educator interest is the highest priority in the selection of a study group topic by AEL staff and the collaborating educator association. The choice of high interest/concern topics helps in the identification of study group members, commitment of members to the study, and dissemination of the final publication by the association and AEL. Topics chosen reflect AEL's interest in professional development and the improvement of instruction and educational leadership. The collaborating associations are aware that AEL will not be involved in political or organizing goals.

Parent involvement in education, use of instructional time, mentoring for beginning teachers, resources for early childhood educators and parents, elementary school guidance, programs of assistance for at-risk students, and shared or site-based decisionmaking are among the topics addressed by the study group publications developed for practitioners. A complete list, Appendix A, provides ordering information. In working with professional educator association to identify topics, AEL staff can be assured of developing products of current interest/need to educators and of increasing dissemination of products viewed as important information for members by the associations.

Product Development and Quality Control of Study Group Publications

Study group products involve teachers or administrators in the development of research or research synthesis reports. Frequently, their

participation as members of the group leads to skill development in survey analysis, research review, and research reporting or the "academic writing style." AEL staff, and association staff when involved, provide examples, instruction, and guidance in these skills. Following its conception in discussions between AEL and association staffs, each study group is described in an AEL Project Plan which is submitted by the sponsoring AEL program for review by senior program directors to assess the project's contributions to the literature and to AEL's mission and goals. This is the first of a six-step Quality Assurance Process completed for each AEL study group publication.

The following characterizes Classroom Instruction program study groups of teachers. While study group members meet to clarify topics and research questions, discuss resources, outline the study, create survey and other instruments used in the study, analyze research results, share perceptions and data from telephone interviewing, and discuss dissemination, development of separate sections of the final product is usually completed outside of meetings by individual members. CI staff then facilitate a peer review process by copying these member-developed and AEL-developed sections and providing all, with guidelines on peer editing, to each member and to involved association staff. Members and association and CI staffs then edit this first draft, free to critique sections and to modify their own work through the anonymity of this approach.

All sections are then returned to CI staff who "meld" writing styles to produce a final draft that "speaks with one voice." In these ways,

members develop their own writing styles, review those of others, experience peer review and editing, and divide the production of research reports--while avoiding face-to-face conflicts over writing styles. By involving association staff and leaders, the study group is able to avoid reference to politically sensitive issues and to increase the product's visibility to enhance dissemination later. The final draft is reviewed by study group members, association staff and leaders (often the Instruction and Professional Development Committees, also), contributors to the study (such as case study representatives), and external reviewers competent in the product's area of interest.

During this same external review period, the study group product begins to wind its way through AEL's Document Product Checklist (see Appendix B). The AEL program sponsoring the study group develops portions of the publication, melds copy, and takes responsibility for the content and program reviews. After program staff incorporate changes suggested by external reviewers, association staff, and study group members, the product is then edited by an AEL writer familiar with AEL's Document Style Manual. Program staff again review the copy and arrange for all graphics or illustrations to be produced. The document, and announcement fliers developed for association and AEL use, is then typeset by AEL staff. After proofreading by a second AEL editor, the study group product is reviewed by the deputy or executive director for consistency with and contribution to AEL's body of publications.

Camera-ready masters of the final product and announcement fliers are then prepared for the cosponsoring association and for AEL's Resource

Center. The AEL program of origin also copies the publication for all study group members and contributors and submits it to the ERIC Clearinghouses for accessioning and to the network of Regional Educational Laboratories and Centers for inclusion in the Communication Service Assistance Project (CSAP). CSAP provides copies of each Lab- or Center-produced publication selected for dissemination to all Labs along with an announcement of each providing ordering information. The Labs frequently mail these announcements to client groups or use the descriptions in their newsletters.

Dissemination and Evaluation of Study Group Publications

While the above section discusses the procedures utilized to insure high quality in publications of interest to practitioners, the opinions of those practitioner product users are also very important to AEL and cosponsoring associations. AEL's Resource Center handles all requests for AEL products and publications and provides these at cost to educators within and outside AEL's Region upon request. The AEL Products and Publication Catalog, all announcement fliers, and CSAP blurbs describe each publication and provide ordering information. Since November 1988, AEL's Resource Center has disseminated approximately 1800 study group publications to requestors throughout the Region and nation. Dissemination by the CI and SGA programs has accounted for an additional 2500 copies over this period.

Cosponsoring associations usually reproduce and disseminate their study groups' publications at no cost to members. Over 25,000 copies of study group publications have been distributed by educator associations

since 1986. The cosponsoring associations also print and include the Study Group Product Assessment Form which increases response rate to AEL.

Each study group publication disseminated is accompanied by a Study Group Product Assessment Form which asks readers to evaluate the quality of the publication and AEL's document provision service and to report their uses of the document and the number of others with whom they share the product (see Study Group Product Assessment Form included as Appendix C). In open-ended response items, readers are asked to identify sections they found most useful and to make suggestions for future publications on this or similar topics. The mailer format of the Assessment Form aids readers in easily returning it to AEL. Analysis of the Forms provides suggestions for improving study group products, generates new study ideas, and leads program staff to track significant impact-extensive use by individual product users.

Study Group Process Evaluation

Study group member perceptions of their involvement in study groups are also a subject of AEL evaluation interest. Between 1987 and 1990, AEL convened three study group member conferences at which members presented awareness workshops on their research findings and met with AEL staff and external evaluators to discuss and record their evaluation of the study group experience. At each conference, these teachers and administrators were asked to record their answers to questions regarding the organization, processes, and dissemination aspects of study groups (see sample assessment included as Appendix D). External evaluators also facilitated focused discussion of the effectiveness of the study group as

a research methodology and, following the 1987 study group conference, surveyed all study group members involved to date. The discussion guides for these process evaluation activities are included as Appendix E. Findings from all three conferences have guided AEL's organization and facilitation of study groups and impacted on dissemination of products by associations and AEL. Discussion, individual reflection notes, and followup survey results from the initial study group member conference held in February 1987 were analyzed by external evaluators Barnette, Smith, and Burch and are reported in AEL's Occasional Paper No. 024 The Effectiveness of the Study Group as an R & D Methodology. The resulting "Summary of Priorities for the Successful Organization and Operation of Study Groups" is attached as Appendix F.

Future of the Study Group as an AEL Research Methodology

The dissemination and evaluation data reported above help to substantiate the continuation of the educator study group as a viable research methodology affording professional development opportunities to study group members and to product users. The Classroom Instruction program proposed continuation with few modifications to the study group in the AEL proposal to OERI for funding continuation during 1991-95. Association cosponsorship will continue with input on topic selection and nomination of study group members. Priority will be given to topics dealing with shared or site-based decisionmaking and assistance to at-risk students. Nominations will gain rigor with study groups announced at professional development opportunities and recruitment solicited from the membership via association journals and announcement at major association conferences.

A variety of research methodologies will be tested, as appropriate to suggested topics and supported by cosponsoring associations. These include focused group interviews, statewide teacher surveys, and development and field testing of programs of assistance to at-risk students. Each study group will be reviewed by AEL Management Team representatives as an AEL Project Plan and all products will continue to be subject to the AEL Quality Assurance Process.

A study group of teachers and administrators representing five school districts working with the School Governance and Administration staff was critical to the development of the QUILT (Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking) Staff Development System. Study group members assisted with topic selection, materials development, and pilot testing of materials. This modification of the above described study group process is expected to result in Regionwide educator involvement in an R & D effort to produce a replicable staff development intervention designed to improve teachers's classroom questioning and responding behaviors. Extensive evaluation data regarding teacher attitudes, knowledge, behaviors, and student observation of teacher and student behaviors are being gathered during 1991-92. While most study groups complete their publications within one year of their organization, the QUILT project will be implemented during the 1991-95 funding cycle.

Recommendations for Study Group Organizers

Suggestions made by participants in the first AEL study group conference remain sound organizing principles for those considering this

research methodology (see Appendix F). Additional recommendations by CI and SGA staff and suggested by association staff experienced in assisting these collaborative groups include the following:

Identify a study group topic of current high interest to a large role group of educators, e.g. elementary teachers, school principals, educators with interest in helping at-risk students, educators and parents involved in site-based decisionmaking, etc.

Reach agreement with the cosponsoring association on the final product and association dissemination in early planning meetings.

Nominate study group members who have both interest in the topic and experience in writing or product development. Consider an application form with a writing sample section. Recruit members with high interest by advance announcements of the study group opportunity in association journals. Consider study groups composed of a variety of education stakeholders--teachers, administrators, parents, even students--as appropriate to topics.

Clarify roles and responsibilities of the organizing agency, the cosponsoring association, and individual participants in advance mailings or at the initial meeting. A realistic description of the work involved in participating should be provided.

Communicate, communicate, communicate. Begin with an advance mailing to outline the initial meeting and follow each meeting with an actions/decisions memo to all members and involved association staff. Make certain everyone sees everything. Frequently reinforce and clarify questions for members by phone or FAX. Leave messages or use home phones for teachers and others with limited daytime access to phones. Try conference calls as occasional meeting alternatives.

Enlist cosponsoring association staff assistance with meeting facilitation and in-kind services such as survey printing and dissemination, meeting space, shared participant mileage when a meeting can be coupled with an association event, use of association phones for telephone interviewing, etc.

Balance the work load across the study group members and staff of organizing and cosponsoring agencies. Study group members should outline and assign the tasks using volunteers as much as is possible. Realize that all volunteers have limited time for such projects. Take on tasks that others cannot do.

Provide training as needed in qualitative or quantitative research methodologies to make the study group truly a professional development experience. Select research methodologies in which teachers and

administrators can achieve success with limited time and study invested. Provide data analysis if the task outgrows the study group's capabilities.

Build in review of current related literature or videotapes and visitations to project sites, if possible. Choose topics and techniques that will extend learning for members and be highly interactive.

Plan evaluation measures early in the project. Assess study group member and association staff perceptions of the process as well as user satisfaction with the product(s).

Design dissemination plans and measures at the outset. Involve study group members in brainstorming dissemination means as well as in presenting study findings at meetings and conferences or in conducting training using their product(s). Encourage cosponsors to create opportunities to link members with the product(s) and with the experiences of study group members.

Recognize the knowledge and experience that members bring to the study group and provide time to formally and informally share during meetings or conference calls.

Acknowledge the significant time and effort involved in study group participation and cite all individuals involved in product completion in the document.

Seek recognition for the study group's work and wider dissemination by submitting the final product(s) to the ERIC Clearinghouses of educational research. Notify past study group members as documents are accessioned or large reprintings are completed by cosponsors or others.

Keep in touch with study group members by periodically mailing related readings. Document study group member and cosponsor dissemination and use of the product(s) by conducting annual assessments and providing cosponsors with study group product reprint forms to chart number of copies, role group and location of recipients, etc.

Provide typeset camera-ready masters of product(s) and announcement fliers to encourage cosponsor dissemination and product requests.

Publicize study group product(s) and continue to make them available to requestors. Issues don't die with the completion of a study group's work.

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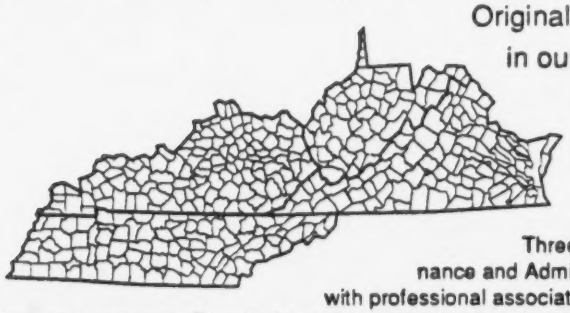
APPENDICES

AEL Study Group Products

Original research and development by educators in our Region



Three of AEL's programs, Classroom Instruction, School Governance and Administration, and Professional Preparation and Research, work with professional associations in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia to form study groups. The study groups conduct research and research synthesis on topics that are especially relevant to them in their various professional capacities.

Drawing Marginal Learners Into the Big Picture
Kentucky Education Association, 1989

This guide describes specific ways that effective teachers of marginal students translate their convictions about students and learning into classroom practice. As fewer students are placed in special education programs and more students are mainstreamed into regular classrooms, the need for guidance on "what works" with marginal learners is needed. This publication can help. (52 pp.) $5.00

Factoring In Empowerment: Participatory Decisionmaking In West Virginia Exemplary Schools
West Virginia Education Association, 1989

This is a report of a study of participatory decisionmaking in West Virginia schools. The study included a literature review and a survey of teachers and administrators in West Virginia's state-identified exemplary schools. Findings from both teachers and principals indicate significantly greater teacher involvement in decisionmaking than commonly reported in the literature. This study reports not only the types of decisions teachers in these schools have routinely been involved in making, but also the extent of teacher involvement in decisionmaking and the means used to ensure teacher involvement. (52 pp.) $5.00

Survey of Effective Elementary Guidance Programs
Kentucky Association of School Administrators and Kentucky Department of Education, 1989

This study group investigated what constitutes effective elementary guidance programs. The study was conducted in two stages. First, members sent out a request for all elementary guidance counselors in Kentucky to nominate effective programs in the state. Additionally, study group members investigated programs in other states. Second, members conducted telephone interviews using an interview protocol consisting of open-ended questions. The results are a rich database describing 36 programs identified as effective. The report includes summaries, analyses, and complete results. (62 pp.) $8.00

Bridges to Strength: Establishing a Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers
Tennessee Education Association, 1988

Recognizing the potential of mentoring programs for beginning teachers to assure quality instruction for students, the Tennessee Education Association and AEL, established a study group to develop publications to help educators organize or participate in mentoring programs. The study group produced the following research-based handbooks on effective mentoring programs, practices, and guidance for beginning teachers.

- **Bridges to Strength: ...An Administrator's Guide** identifies various problem areas that can be addressed by establishing a mentoring program. It also aids administrators in the planning and implementation of mentoring programs and summarizes those components of effective mentoring programs that were identified in a survey of Tennessee mentors and beginning teachers. (26 pp.) $4.00

- **Bridges to Strength: ...The Beginning Teacher's Handbook** provides assistance on practical planning considerations, establishing classroom rules and consequences, time management, and handling the stresses of teaching. (52 pp. plus appendices) $4.00

- **Bridges to Strength: ...The Mentor Teacher Resource Book** offers guidance on establishing a mentor/beginning teacher relationship and conferencing and coaching. The Resource Book also provides classroom observation instruments. (68 pp.) $4.50

Helping Hands: Effective Programs for At-Risk Students In Virginia
Virginia Education Association, 1988

A study group of six educators studied descriptions of over 100 programs for at-risk students in Virginia public schools, selected those that appeared most effective based upon questionnaire responses, and summarized key

program features in this report. Eighteen Virginia programs, serving students from prekindergarten through high school, are examined in-depth. (47 pp.) $5.00

Opinions About the Tennessee Career Ladder: A Statewide Survey of Tennessee Administrators
Tennessee Association for School Supervision and Administration, 1988

In November 1987, this study group surveyed administrators across Tennessee to learn their opinions about the Administrator Career Ladder—a new program that had been implemented in the spring of 1985 as part of a much larger reform effort in Tennessee, the Comprehensive Education Reform Act. Throughout its short lifetime, Tennessee's Career Ladder has had its share of outspoken opponents and proponents. The survey results, presented in this report, cover in detail the continuing split in opinion. Full report (80 pp.) $8.00. Short summary (8 pp.) free

Participatory Decisionmaking: Working Models in Virginia Elementary Schools
Virginia Education Association and Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, 1988

The projects described in this publication have at least one common concept—an increase in teacher involvement in school-based decisionmaking. Case studies of each of the six projects include sections on program development and goals, organizational structure, required resources, assessment, future of the program, and advice to future implementers of participatory decisionmaking models. Data on accomplishments and obstacles in all projects were aggregated and are summarized in separate sections. The publication also includes a description of the study, an operational definition of participatory decisionmaking, and a bibliography on participatory decisionmaking. (30 pp.) $4.50

Senate Bill 14—1988 Changes in Funding Education in West Virginia
Patricia E. Ceperley, 1988

Based on the work of the AEL-West Virginia Association of School Administrators School Finance Study Team, this report analyzes the effect of West Virginia Senate Bill 14 on schools in the state. The report examines the changes made in Chapter 18, Article 9A, the basic support program for West Virginia's public schools. Each section is analyzed. The individual and collective effects are summarized. The financial effects on counties vary enormously. However, on a statewide basis, the results of SB 14 is to centralize and equalize the basic school support system, while encouraging school improvement efforts. (9 pp.) $2.00

A Summary of Current Programs Focusing on the Recruitment of Minority Candidates to Careers in Professional Education
Tennessee Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1988

This report identifies programs from across the nation that address recruitment, retention, and support of minority candidates to careers in professional education. Forty-five programs are described, clustered under four headings: pre-college programs, programs for recruitment from alternate pools, college/university initiatives, and marketing/placement of graduates. Each program is rated in terms of potential applicability to Tennessee or to Tennessee institutions of higher education. (207 pp.) $15.00

Elementary School Guidance and Counseling in Virginia: An Emerging Program
Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, 1987

The Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals joined with AEL in conducting a statewide study of principals' and superintendents' perceptions of a 1986 state department of education resolution calling for the establishment of guidance and counseling services in all elementary schools. The study group surveyed all division superintendents and a random sample of 700 elementary school principals. Based on the results of the survey, the study group reported five major findings and made five recommendations for the implementation of the guidance and counseling program. (53 pp.) $5.00

Public Opinion About Kentucky School Boards: Results of a Statewide Survey
Kentucky School Boards Association, 1987

A random telephone survey was conducted in July 1987 for the Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA) by the University of Kentucky Survey Research Center. KSBA and AEL cosponsored the study as part of a collaborative effort to find out the public's perceptions about the role of the local school board. Survey questions also addressed public opinions about the quality of schools in Kentucky.

The survey represented a cross section of the state—geographically and demographically—and included responses from 473 Kentuckians. (61 pp.) $6.00

A Statewide Program of Support for Beginning Administrators—The Kentucky Institute for Beginning Principals
Kentucky Association of School Administrators, 1987

Kentucky's Institute for Beginning Principals was designed and implemented by a study group sponsored jointly by the Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) and AEL. The question addressed by this group was: How can KASA help beginning principals have an effective first year, so that Kentucky students have the benefit of strong leadership, and so that new school administrators are successful and choose to stay in the ranks of administration? This report is a summary of the group's work: from selection of the topic, through the planning stages, to the culmination of their work in the 1987 Institute for Beginning Principals. (90 pp.) $8.50

A Study on the Use of Time for Reading Instruction in Grades One, Two, and Three in West Virginia Schools
West Virginia Association of School Administrators, 1987

To investigate the effects of a 1986 state board of education policy governing the use of instructional time for reading, a WVASA-AEL study group surveyed over 400 teachers and nearly 300 principals. The data revealed seven major findings described in this report. (16 pp.) $2.00

Training Needs for West Virginia Boardsmanship Academy
West Virginia School Boards Association, 1987

The WVSBA and AEL organized a study group to collect and analyze data from which to make recommendations for the West Virginia Boardsmanship Academy.

This study consisted of three separate phases. First, during a March 1987 meeting of the WVSBA Boardsmanship Academy Board of Directors, a list of training needs of board members was developed. The second phase consisted of a statewide survey of influential leaders. The third phase was a needs assessment of members of WVSBA in attendance at the 1987 conference.

The study yielded six major findings and four major recommendations. (76 pp.) $8.00

Computer Awareness Sessions for Tennessee School Administrators and **Computer Awareness Sessions for Tennessee Teachers**
Tennessee Education Association, 1986

These two booklets describe workshops that acquaint school administrators and teachers with the ease of using the microcomputer and with the range of computer applications in school management and instruction. Agendas for two half-day training sessions are included. Self-instructional materials are provided for four particular computer programs (including word processing, database management, and an electronic gradebook). These print materials are designed to accompany specific public domain (available from Tennessee Department of Education) and Minnesota Educational Computer Corporation (available from MECC providers) programs on Apple disks. The booklets and disks help educators answer the question, "What can computers do for me?" (15 pp.) $3.00 each

Keys to an Effective Internship: A Guide for Kentucky Beginning Teachers
Kentucky Education Association, 1986

This guide offers advice to new teachers, particularly those involved in the Kentucky Beginning Teacher Internship Program. Based on a survey of past interns, suggestions are discussed in four major categories—People, Activities, Resources, and General Tips. The guide will make the assessment and assistance process of greater benefit to future beginning teachers. (17 pp.) $4.00

Parent Education Notebook
Tennessee Education Association, 1986

This book is a collection of activities that parents of kindergarten and first grade students can use with their children at home. The activities are categorized in six developmental skill areas and are keyed to the level of the child. Teachers select activities appropriate for a particular child and send them home with an explanatory letter to parents. A sample letter and agendas for teacher and parent orientation sessions are included. (118 pp.) $11.00

Southwest Virginia Instructional Conference: A Needs-Based Professional Development Model
Virginia Education Association, 1986

This booklet includes instruments for assessing staff development needs and identifying resource personnel. Data resulting from administration of the instruments were used to select topics and presenters for the Southwest Virginia Instructional Conference. The conference agenda and evaluation results are also included. The model presents an effective example of teachers helping teachers from planning to presentation. (16 pp.) $4.00

Tips for Teaching Marginal Learners
Kentucky Education Association, 1986

This booklet pools the ideas of over 100 teachers from several states on effective teaching strategies for marginal learners. Suggestions are categorized in seven sections, ranging from providing positive reinforcement to using peer tutoring to incorporating community resources. The publication assists regular education teachers in teaching both mainstreamed special education students and slow learners. (16 pp.) $4.00

AEL Study Group Products

Original research and development by educators in our Region.

Middle Schools in the Making: A Lesson in Restructuring, 1990. $4.50

Maintaining Positive Educator Morale During Consolidation, 1988. $5.00

TEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Resource Packets, 1990. $72/set, also sold individually.

Teaching Combined Grade Classes: Real Problems and Promising Practices, 1990. $5.00

School Advisory Councils—West Virginia Association of School Administrators, 1990.

Rationale: Why Parent Involvement?—West Virginia Association of School Administrators, 1990.

Conversations with the Best And Brightest: Leading the Way to Excellence—Virginia Center for Educational Leadership, 1990.

Perceptions of TASSA's Mission: A Statewide Survey of Tennessee Administrators—Tennessee Association for School Supervision and Administration, 1990.

WVEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Casebook, 1991. $5.50

Document Production Checklist

Working Title of Document

_____

_____

_____

Person Responsible

_____

Program/Center

_____

Wang Reference

_____

Stage	Person Assigned	Date Completed/ Initials
1. Production of Draft Copy	_____	_____
2. Content Review	_____	_____
3. Grammar/Style Edit	_____	_____
4. Reference/Disclaimer Check and Proofreading	_____	_____
5. Production of Artwork (if needed)	_____	_____
6. Program/Center Director Review	_____	_____
7. Executive Review	_____	_____

Is an Editorial Board Review desired? _____Yes _____No
If yes, which stage(s)?

Stage:_____ Date completed/Initials:_____

Stage:_____ Date completed/Initials:_____

Other Reviews Needed:

Stage	Person Assigned	Date Completed/ Initials
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Notes

PURPOSE

In order to address its goal of linking practitioners with research-based knowledge and products, AEL uses a variety of communication devices: publications, workshops, and technical assistance, to cite a few. Since publications typically provide the basis for the Laboratory's other communications with practitioners, AEL makes a concerted effort to produce documents that meet reasonable standards of readability, technical accuracy, and timeliness. To achieve these standards, the Laboratory has established a quality control process for its publications. The process includes seven stages that guide a publication from first draft to final approval of the Executive Director's office. This Document Production Checklist serves as a written record that applicable AEL publications have been shepherded through the quality control process.

WHEN TO USE

The Document Production Checklist should be used for all broad audience communications, including:

- OERI deliverables
- Conference/workshop materials
- Institutional brochures, announcements, and flyers
- Articles written for publication in AEL or other publications

Documents not included in the above categories, such as correspondence and announcements to small groups (under 25 people) are peer reviewed in the traditional manner. Of course, all documents being sent to officials such as CSSOs or other state policymakers, OERI, AEL Board members, or the media should be reviewed by the Director's office.

HOW TO USE

Fill in the top portion of the Document Tracking Form when work on a document is first assigned. Be sure to designate a "Person Responsible." **At the end of each stage, the document is returned to the person responsible,** who then makes an assignment for the next stage.

Stage 1. Production of Draft Copy: Program/center director works with staff or consultant to prepare high quality draft copy.

Stage 2. Content Review: Someone other than author reviews draft copy for accuracy of content.

Stage 3. Grammar/Style Edit: Using the AEL style manual, someone other than the author edits for grammar and style.

Stage 4. Reference/Disclaimer Check and Proofreading: Someone other than the original typist makes sure the references cited in the text match those cited in the reference section, and that references are consistent stylistically. The reviewer makes sure appropriate disclaimers are included and that all typographical errors are corrected.

Stage 5. Production of Artwork (if needed): Program/center director works with graphic artist to produce desired document design.

Stage 6. Program/Center Director Review: Program/center director reviews document and approves it for reproduction subject to Executive Review.

Stage 7. Executive Review: Executive Director's office reviews document and approves it for dissemination.

Editorial Board Review: The Editorial Board is available to review a document at any stage in its development. The Editorial Board can make recommendations regarding audience appropriateness, format design, and quality of content and writing.

Other Reviews Needed: The program/center director may request additional reviews at any stage of the process. For example, other reviewers may be needed at Stage 6 when more than one program/center will use or distribute the document.

Use the "Notes" box for special instructions or other information.

Appalachia Educational Laboratory
Study Group Product Assessment Form

A. Background

1. Name of Product: Participatory Decisionmaking: Working Models in Virginia Elementary Schools
2. Name: _____
3. School/District: _____
4. Type of Job You Hold: _____
5. State: _____

B. Rating

This instrument asks you to evaluate this particular product on a series of product quality scales. Please mark your responses with an "X" (corresponding to your answer) at any point along the scale provided. If you cannot reply to any scale, please check the "Cannot Reply" option for that item.

1. How easy was it for your to get this material?
___Cannot Reply

Difficult ——— Very Easy

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

2. How clearly presented was the information in this material?
___Cannot Reply

Unclear ——— Very Clear

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

3. How credible was the information in this material?
___Cannot Reply

Unbelievable ——— Very Believable

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

4. How useful was the information in this material?
___Cannot Reply

Not Useful ——— Very Useful

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50

5. Which sections of the report have you found helpful? Please explain briefly how these sections helped you.

Please turn to back

6. What changes would make the report more valuable?

7. How did you learn of the availability of this report?

8. Have you shared your copy with other educators? If so, how many?

Thank you for completing this evaluation/contribution form.
Please fold, staple, stamp, and mail to AEL.

Affix
Postage
Here

AEL

P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325

AEL Study Group Annual Conference

Discussion Guide

Crowne Plaza Hotel
Memphis, Tennessee
February 7, 1987

Study Group Discussion Guide

AEL's Classroom Instruction (CI) and School Governance and Administration (SGA) program staff would like to assess the effectiveness of the study group as a professional development activity for educators. We also want to improve the experience for 1987 and subsequent study group members. Your suggestions will help us accomplish these goals.

The AEL conference sessions and this discussion guide are designed to capture your thoughts on the process and products of study group membership and your suggestions for improving these for group members and associations. We appreciate your candor in responding to the following questions.

12:30 - 1:30 p.m. State Discussions of Study Groups

1. Describe in two sentences the purpose and results of your study group's efforts to date, as you see them.

2. List possible topics for future study groups. These should be significant issues confronting educators in your state.

3. The CI and SGA programs may form study groups which draw from several associations or organizations within a state during 1987-1990. Do you like the idea of a statewide study group formed from several associations?
   ___Yes ___No

4. Name other associations with which your association may find collaboration useful.

5. In your opinion, what would be the benefits and problems with such collaborative study groups?

Benefits	Problems

6. Cross-state study groups of primarily teachers or administrators are another possibility. Do you like the idea of cross-state study groups?

7. What topics would members of your association want to study with members in other states of AEL's Region?

8. What are the benefits and problems with cross-state collaboration?

Benefits	Problems

1:45 - 3:00 p.m. Job-Alike Work Session--
The Study Group: A Workable System for Short-Term R & D

We are interested in your perceptions of the organization and operation of study groups as a process or system for conducting, transforming, and using eduational research and development. In the pages that follow, please write your impressions of (A) how your study group worked, and (B) how an ideal study group model might function. For some topics, you may not have any firsthand knowledge or information. Leave that square blank--or write what you think happened. Try to respond to B for every item if only to write "same as A" or "no change recommended."

Topic I: Organization

Subtopics	A (Current)	B (Ideal)
Selection of topic		
Size of study group		
Selection of members		

Subtopics	A (Current)	B (Ideal)
Expenditure of funds		
Commitment and ownership by the association		
Commitment of individual members		

Keys to the Successful Organization of Study Groups:

Topic II: Process

Subtopics	A (Current)	B (Ideal)
Leadership		
Definition of specific task of study group		
Meetings--time, place, frequency		

Subtopics	A (Current)	B (Ideal)
Use of subcommittee structures		
Use of consultants or "associate" members		
Relationship with AEL		
Relationship with higher education faculty		

Subtopics	A (Current)	B (Ideal)
Use of R & D resources		
Use of research principles		
Use of outside resources		

Keys to Successful Process:

Topic III: Dissemination

Subtopics	A (Current)	B (Ideal)
How will information or product be used?		
Who will use information or product?		
How will study group results be disseminated?		

Subtopics	A (Current)	B (Ideal)
How can assocations (study group members) help AEL document the use or impact?		

Keys to Successful Dissemination: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Optional

I would be willing to discuss my study group experiences with AEL staff or with the third-party AEL evaluator.

___Yes ___No

I would like a copy of my discussion guide responses. ___Yes ___No

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Work Phone: _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE TO AEL STAFF BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE CONFERENCE. THANK YOU.

Potpourri '90
Study Group Member Reflections
Interview Design Process Questions
Friday, October 26, 1990

Directions: Using the question below, interview the person across from you. Record the responses in the space under the question and on the back of the page. You will have 3 minutes to conduct each interview. You will be interviewing five or six people. Record each individual's responses even if they are the same as someone else's. Record each respondent's ideas, not your own interpretation. Reread the question to a given respondent as needed.

Questions for Pair #1:

1. Think about the operations of your study group. "Operations" refers to such things as: selection of members, the size of the group, commitment of members, meeting times and dates, expenditure of funds, identification of tasks, group process, delegation of tasks, and other things that helped the group accomplish its work.

   A. What operations seemed to work best in your study group?

   B. Name two or three ways to improve the operations of your group's work.

Questions for Pair #2:

2. AEL designed the study group process to be a professional development experience for members.

   A. In what ways did you find your participation to be personally or professionally rewarding?

   B. What suggestions would you make so that the study group experience is more professionally rewarding for members?

Questions for Pair #3:

3. AEL's role in the study group work is to provide technical assistance, to facilitate the work of the group, and to help disseminate the results.

   A. Name the three or four contributions that AEL made to the study group efforts that were the most helpful to completing the task.

   B. What two or three things could AEL have done to have been more helpful to the study group and its members?

Questions for Pair #4:

4. Study group products are intended to be useful for teachers and administrators.

   A. Name two or three ways your product is useful to educators.

   B. How could AEL study group products be more useful to educators in the Region?

Questions for Pair #5:

5. Study groups are collaborative efforts between associations and AEL.

   A. Give two or three examples of contributions your association made to your study group effort.

   B. Give two or three examples of how your association may have benefited from the study group effort.

   C. What suggestions do you have for improving the collaboration between your association and AEL?

E

MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38152

Center of Excellence - Teacher Education
Education Building 105
(901) 454-2310

March 18, 1987

Dear Study Group Participant:

If you were one of the participants in the AEL Study Group Annual Conference in Memphis, we want to extend out thanks for the input you provided on the organization, process, and dissemination of study groups. From that input, we have developed the enclosed survey. This survey has two purposes. One is to provide the opportunity for those who were not able to attend the conference to provide input and the other is to provide for verification and consensus on issues identified at the conference.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey and return it in the enclosed pre-posted envelope. We would like to have all surveys returned by April 6, 1987. If possible please complete the survey today. I know that the longer I put off completing a survey the less likely it is that I will do it. Your input is greatly appreciated.

The code number on the survey is for our survey record keeping. Results will be reported by group and not by individual. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (901) 454-3410.

Sincerely,

J. Jackson Barnette

J. Jackson Barnette, Ph. D.
Associate Professor
401-A College of Education

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action University

STUDY GROUP SURVEY--March 1987 Code _____

Demographic Information

Present employment position _____

Where employed _____

Years in present position _____

Years working in education _____

What was your role in the study group?

____ Chair or co-chair ____ Member ____ Associate Member

To what education associations do you belong, and do you presently hold office?

Association	Office (please specify)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

As a study group member, who did you primarily represent (association/school district/organization)? _____

Starting on the next page are several issues which may be addressed by study groups. For each issue, indicate the IMPORTANCE of the issue in your setting, the FEASIBILITY of dealing with the issue using a study group, and the TYPE OF STUDY GROUP which you feel would be most effective in dealing with the issue.

1. How important is each issue in your employment setting?

   Importance scale: 1 = not important TO 5 = highly important issue

2. How feasible is it to deal with each issue using a study group approach?

   Feasibility scale: 1 = not feasible TO 5 = highly feasible

3. What type of study group do you feel would be most effective in dealing with the issue and most effective in disseminating useful information on findings?

   L = Local S = Statewide R = Regional (cross states) N = National

Please select only one in each column for each issue.

1 = not TO 5 = highly

	Importance	Feasibility of using SG	Type of SG
School dropout prevention	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Support for beginning principals	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Support for beginning teachers	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Substance abuse education/prevention	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Basic skills testing	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Testing in general	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Class size	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Preservice teacher preparation	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Sex education/family life/AIDS education	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Early childhood education	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
School day/year extensions/ latchkey programs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Career ladder/differential pay/ merit pay programs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Academic competition programs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Gifted education/enrichment	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Parental support/involvement	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Community support/involvement	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Marginal learner programs	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Elementary guidance/counseling	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Secondary guidance/counseling	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Problems unique to rural schools	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Inservice/staff development	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Teacher certification	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Teacher evaluation	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Administrator evaluation	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
School effectiveness evaluation	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Educational reform movements	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Discipline	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Dealing with pressure groups	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Funding for education	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Use of technology in education	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Classroom management	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N

	Importance	Feasibility of using SG	Type of SG
Teacher "burn-out," educator stress	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
At-risk youth	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
Other issues			
_____	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N
_____	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	L S R N

Listed below are methods for selecting a study group topic. Beside each listing, indicate for your study group which method was used and which method you prefer.

Check one in each column.

	Method Used	Method Preferred
1. Topic selected by association and given to SG	_____	_____
2. Topic alternatives selected by association and SG decides which to address	_____	_____
3. SG identifies topics and selects	_____	_____
4. SG leader selects topics	_____	_____
5. Unknown	_____	

Listed below are methods for selecting study group members. Beside each listing, indicate for your study group which method was used and which method you prefer.

Check one in each column.

	Method Used	Method Preferred
1. Members selected by the association with no attempt to balance across professions or geography	_____	_____
2. Members selected by the association with balance across professions and geography	_____	_____
3. Members selected by association with balance across professions, but not geography	_____	_____
4. Members selected by association with balance across geography, but not professions	_____	_____
5. Members not selected by the association	_____	_____
6. Unknown	_____	

Of the following methods for selecting a study group chairperson, which method was used for your study group, and which method would you prefer?

Check one in each column.

	Method Used	Method Preferred
1. The association selected the chairperson	_____	_____
2. There was no chairperson	_____	_____
3. The SG members selected a chairperson	_____	_____
4. The facilitator served as chairperson	_____	_____
5. Unknown	_____	

Do you believe it would be helpful to have a person in each new study group who has served in a previous study group? ____ Yes ____ No

Are you interested in serving in a new study group? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, would you prefer to serve in a study group dealing with the same topic or a new topic? ____ Same topic ____ New topic

While all of the following are keys to successful functioning of a study group, check those which are, in your opinion, the MOST IMPORTANT FIVE.

Please check only five.

1. ____ Outside technical assistance
2. ____ Effective facilitator from an outside organization
3. ____ Awareness of the amount of time needed for SG participation
4. ____ Members who are willing to work
5. ____ Committed SG members
6. ____ Diversity of SG membership
7. ____ Common purpose/unity of SG members
8. ____ SG members interested in the topic
9. ____ Commitment of local school administrators for their staff to be involved in SG
10. ____ Good communication among SG members
11. ____ Careful selection of SG members
12. ____ Having a worthwhile topic
13. ____ Compatibility of SG members
14. ____ Effective association leadership/involvement

Of the services/functions provided by AEL, check those which are, in your opinion, the MOST IMPORTANT THREE.

Please check only three.

1. ____ Facilitator
2. ____ Technical assistance by AEL staff
3. ____ Materials/documents for SG use
4. ____ Funding
5. ____ SG sharing session (Memphis, TN)
6. ____ Relationship between AEL and association(s)
7. ____ Consultants provided (other than AEL staff)

While all of the following are keys to successful study group process, chec those which are, in your opinion, the MOST IMPORTANT FIVE.

Please check only five.

1. ____ Availability of materials
2. ____ Facilitator role
3. ____ SG leadership
4. ____ Interested/committed SG members
5. ____ Knowing where to get help
6. ____ Sufficient number of group meetings
7. ____ Knowing what has to be done (specific SG objectives)
8. ____ Availability of technical assistance
9. ____ Keeping on task/meeting deadlines
10. ____ Each SG member having specific tasks/responsibilities
11. ____ Having a plan for the process
12. ____ Formulating SG goals
13. ____ Effective SG size
14. ____ Communication among SG members
15. ____ Effective SG meetings
16. ____ Involvement of all SG members
17. ____ Ability of SG members to make it to meetings
18. ____ Interim task/product review

What do you believe to be the useful life of your study group's product(s) years? ____ 1 or less ____ 2-3 ____ 4-5 ____ More than 5

To date, how have information and/or products from your study group been disseminated? (Check all that apply.)

	Type	
____ Association journals	____ State	____ National
____ Association newsletters	____ State	____ National
____ Association meetings/conferences	____ State	____ National
____ Workshops or seminars		
____ In State Department of Education publications		
____ In local newspapers/radio, etc.		
____ To interested educators in local school districts		
____ In AEL publications	____ ERIC	
____ Product(s) are not yet available for dissemination		

While all of the following are keys to successful dissemination, check those which are, in your opinion, the MOST IMPORTANT FIVE.

Please check only five.

1. ____ Having a useful/valuable product to disseminate
2. ____ Having funds to support dissemination
3. ____ Having a specific plan for dissemination
4. ____ Determining potential users
5. ____ Publicizing availability of product
6. ____ Making presentations at workshops/conferences
7. ____ Having a timely product to disseminate
8. ____ Putting information in association publications
9. ____ Following up on use of the product
10. ____ Having a reasonable cost for the product

What would be, in your opinion, the best balance of types of persons in a study group dealing with the issue your study group dealt with? Please enter the number of each.

_____ Facilitator(s)	_____ Teachers
_____ Principal(s)	_____ Superintendent(s)
_____ Higher Education faculty	_____ Local school board members
_____ Legislators	_____ State Department representatives
_____ State Board member(s)	_____ Curriculum supervisor(s)
_____ Professional association staff	

Others: _____ specify: _____

_____ specify: _____

Thank you for your assistance. You will be sent a copy of the AEL Occasional Paper which will be based on the results of the Study Group Sharing Conference and this survey.

Summary of Priorities for the Successful Organization and Operation of Study Groups

In previous sections of this paper, many recommendations have been made regarding the organization, processes, and dissemination aspects of study groups. Considering these recommendations, as well as the keys identified and ranked by study group members, certain factors emerge as being of high priority in the organization and operation of study groups.

1. Study group members should be selected by the association, taking into consideration the need for a balance by geographic region, position type, gender, race, points of view, and technical skills.

2. Study group members should be interested in the topic area, be willing and able to commit the time needed to work with the study group, and have the support of their employing organization for their involvement.

3. Study group members and their employing organizations should be made aware of the level of commitment and time required for study group involvement prior to the decision to participate.

4. Study groups should be initiated and initially organized by an independent facilitating organization working with the association leadership.

5. A study group chairperson should be selected with input from study group members.

6. The size of the study group should be determined by the nature of the topic and need for different types of individuals.

7. Large study groups should be made up of subcommittees having specific responsibilities and a recognized subcommittee chairperson.

8. Study group members should participate in selecting or focusing the topic being investigated.

9. The selected topic should clearly reflect educational need and be based on current educational research findings.

Excerpted from: Barnett, J. J., Smith, D. L., & Burch, B. G. (1987). The Effectiveness of the Study Group as an R & D Methodology (AEL Occasional Paper No. 24). Charleston, WV: Appalachia Educational Laboratory.

10. Once the topic is identified and focused, study group tasks should be delineated and planned, taking into consideration the resources and time available for the work. The group's efforts should be directed toward the development and dissemination of a realistic, specific product designed to meet specific need(s) of educators.

11. Once the intended product has been identified, conduct at least an informal market assessment to determine potential users, uses, value of the product, timeliness of the product, and costs of the product.

12. All participating organizations should share the costs of study group operations and be recognized for their contributions.

13. Study group meetings should be held as necessary, be as convenient as possible, be well-planned, be efficient, and should be supplemented by other forms of communication.

14. A budget for the use of study group funds should be developed, reserving funds for operation and dissemination activities.

15. The facilitator should provide guidance and make arrangements for provision of information and technical assistance as needed and ensure that these are provided in a timely manner.

16. Strategies for assessing the use and effectiveness of the product should be determined.

17. Strategies for assessing overall study group efforts should be determined.

18. AEL and the associations should publicize the work and products of the study groups, including recongition of individual members of the study groups.

19. The sponsoring organization and the facilitator should maintain a role of independent facilitation and mediate only when it is clear that the study group is not progressing.

To aid in the organization and operation of study groups, a Study Group Check List, which reflects many of these priorities, is attached.

Study Group Check List

1. ____ Initiation of Study Group Process by sponsoring agency.

2. ____ Identification of potential problem areas or concerns of participating agencies.

3. ____ Invite participating agencies to form a Study Group to study a specific problem.

4. ____ Participating agencies elect or appoint members who have demonstrated leadership in the organization.

5. ____ Sponsoring agency is represented by one member who functions as a facilitator and liaison for the Study Group.

6. ____ Initial task of the Study Group is focused on clarification of the problem and assessing the resources within the group.

7. ____ One member of the Study Group is identified as the leader.

8. ____ Tasks and timelines are identified for the Study Group to resolve the problem.

9. ____ A product such as a report, video or staff development materials is identified for a specific audience.

10. ____ Individual group members have specific responsibilities and commitments to meet for the Study Group.

11. ____ Communication is inccuraged between formal meetings through letters, drafts of reports and telephone.

12. ____ Meetings are conducted by the Study Group or sub groups on a timely basis.

13. ____ Final report or product is developed by the Study Group.

14. ____ Product is disseminated to the target group.

15. ____ Follow-up is made to study the impact of the product.

16. ____ Study Group evaluates its overall effort.